Appl. No. 10/673,061
Amdt. dated September 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 28, 2006

PATENT

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

       1.   (Currently Amended) A mail processing system, comprising:

      a plurality of trays that are each adapted to hold a plurality of mail items, wherein the mail items in a tray are ~~directed~~ addressed to a common recipient;

      a plurality of mail processing machines that are adapted to process the mail items through any of a plurality of distinct ~~, wherein different mail items may take different~~ processing paths through the plurality of mail processing machines; and

      a tray tag generator that is configured to produce tray tags, wherein each of the plurality of trays is associated with a tray tag, wherein each tray tag includes recipient information identifying processing requirements relating to the recipient of the mail items in the tray associated with the tray tag.

       2.   (Original) The mail processing system of claim 1, further comprising readers configured to read information from the tray tags.

       3 .   (Original) The mail processing system of claim 2, wherein the readers comprise bar code readers.

       4.   (Original) The mail processing system of claim 2, wherein the readers comprise emissive tag readers.

       5.   (Currently Amended) A mail processing system, comprising:

      a plurality of trays that are each adapted to hold a plurality of mail items, wherein the mail items in a tray are ~~directed~~ addressed to a common recipient;

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a plurality of mail processing machines that are adapted to process the mail items

~~through any of a plurality of distinct~~ <u>through any of a plurality of distinct</u>, ~~wherein different mail items may take different~~ processing

paths through the plurality of mail processing machines;

a plurality of tray tags, wherein each tray is associated with a tray tag that

includes recipient information identifying processing requirements relating to the recipient of the

mail items in the tray associated with the tray tag; and

a process management system that is configured to receive processing status

information relating to the trays and output the information upon request.

6.   (Original) The mail processing system of claim 5, further comprising at

least one reader configured to obtain the process status information by reading information from

tray tags.

7.   (Original) The mail processing system of claim 6, wherein the reader

comprises a bar code reader.

8.   (Original) The mail processing system of claim 6, wherein the tray tag

comprises an emissive tag, and wherein the reader comprises an emissive tag reader.

9.   (Withdrawn) A mail processing system, comprising:

at least one mail processing machine;

a computing device;

software that programs the computing device to:

receive information relating to the status of a specific process segment of a

tray of mail items; and

display the status of the specific process segment of the tray of mail items

with respect to the mail processing machine; and

a tray tag associated with each process segment of a mail drop, wherein the tray

tag includes recipient information identifying processing requirements relating to a recipient of

the mail items in the process segment.

10.   (Withdrawn) The mail processing system of claim 9, further comprising at least one reader configured to obtain process status information from the tray tag associated with each process segment in a mail drop.

11.   (Withdrawn) The mail processing system of claim 10, wherein the reader comprises a bar code reader.

12.   (Withdrawn) The mail processing system of claim 10, wherein the tray tag comprises an emissive tag, and wherein the reader comprises an emissive tag reader.

13.   (Currently Amended) A method of processing mail items, comprising:
        receiving a mail drop comprising a plurality of trays of mail items, wherein each tray contains mail items for a~~addressed to a~~ common recipient;
        associating each tray with a tray tag, wherein each tray tag includes recipient information identifying processing requirements relating to the recipient;
        segmenting the mail into a plurality of process segments depending upon certain characteristics of the mail items;
        processing each of the plurality of process segments through different processes such that each process segment has a status with respect to its process;
        using the tray tag to periodically update at least one process segment's status information in a process management system, wherein the at least one process segment is from a particular tray; and
        using the status information of the at least one process segment to manage the processing of a different process segment from the particular tray.

14.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein the tray tag includes a bar code for scanning the recipient information from the tray ~~ticket~~tag.

15.   (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein each mail item includes a remittance to the recipient.

16.   (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the mail is processed by a processor for the recipient according to particular processing standards, and wherein the processor receives compensation from the recipient based on the processor's performance with respect to the standard, and wherein the tray tags include information that identifies the processing standards for the recipient relating to the tray.

17.   (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein the process management system comprises a computing device and software that programs the computing device to:

receive information relating to the status of a specific process segment from a tray; and

display information relating to the status of the specific process segment from the tray in response to a request from a user.

18.   (Currently Amended) A method of processing mail items, comprising:

receiving a mail drop comprising a plurality of trays of mail items, each mail item being addressed to a common recipient;

associating each tray with a tray tag that includes recipient information identifying processing requirements relating to a the recipient of the mail items in the tray associated with the tray tag;

processing the mail items through a plurality of processing steps; and

periodically using the tray tags to update the status of trays with respect to the processing steps in a processing management system.

19.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of periodically using the tray tags to update the status of trays with respect to the processing steps in a processing management system comprises reading information from the tray tags using a bar code reader.

20.   (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of periodically using the tray tags to update the status of trays with respect to the processing steps in a processing

management system comprises reading information from the tray tags using an emissive tag

reader.